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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9873  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3161  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2507  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2448  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5364  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2302  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1955  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2450  
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000103

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, INL/AEE  
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2020  
TAGS: ECON PREL PGOV PINR KCRM LA BM  
SUBJECT: BURMA: ATTACK ON POLICE PATROL IN GOLDEN TRIANGLE  
BORDER AREA

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Brian Andrews for Reasons 1.4  
(b) & (d).

¶1. (SBU) A variety of Burmese exile and Thai media outlets reported February 22 that Burmese police were attacked on February 20 while on boat patrol on the Mekong River along the Burma-Thailand-Laos border.

¶2. (C) Post's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Attaché confirmed that on February 20 a joint patrol consisting of seven officers from the Wan Pone police station in Shan state, three officers from Wan Pone Anti-Narcotics Task Force, two soldiers from the people's militia (local militia under the Army's control) and three boat drivers (15 persons total) embarked on a patrol in three boats along the Mekong River bordering Laos. At 12:00, an armed group attacked the patrol, leaving 10 dead, two injured, and three missing. The two injured officers, Police Second Lt. Sein Hlaing and Police Private Ki Bu, are recovering at a Rangoon hospital. Both are expected to survive, although one remains in intensive care. The GOB believes fugitive drug trafficker Sai Naw Kham's group is responsible for the attack. (Note: Our DEA Attaché believes this is a likely explanation, and that the attack was probably a retaliation for an earlier Burmese police drug bust in Tachilek. End note.) Burmese authorities believe the attackers escaped the scene of the shooting in boats and fled into Laos.

¶3. (C) According to a statement from Police Second Lt. Sein Hlaing, his patrol observed suspicious activities on an island in the Mekong and when they disembarked to investigate, some of the suspects fled. The patrol teams searched the island and encountered about 30 attackers who fired on the patrol. (Note: Press accounts stated the attackers used 40 mm grenade launchers and small arms to attack the patrol. End note.) Laos authorities have been cooperating with the GOB Border Committee to search the Laos side of the border, where the two survivors and three corpses were found.

DINGER